



COWBOY STAR OF THE MOVIES

TIM HOLT

No. 16

10¢



In this issue:



Another exciting
adventure of the
GHOST RIDER!



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TIM HOLT'S WESTERN ALBUM



TIM grins at young Jimmy Mackenzie on the set of "Masked Raiders," and gets a nice grin back. Notice Jimmy's two guns.



RODEO hands watch the contests in the arena, but Tim and Chito, standing near one of the chutes, have private business.



READY to grab, as the badman aims to fire, is Chito Rafferty. The rifle may go off, but the bullet won't hit anyone!

TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT



in "TERROR'S TREASURE!"

WHEN CLIFF PARKER RODE DOWN FROM THE HOGBACK HILLS INTO SUNSET, HE BROUGHT WITH HIM A PIECE OF PAPER. IT WAS OLD AND STAINED, AND ON IT WAS A SCRAWL THAT SPELLED DEATH TO HIM...

AS HE PASSED A SHADOWED ALLEYWAY, TWO HORSES THUNDERED DOWN ON HIM, AND TWO MEN—SINGING IN THEIR HANDS—DOVE STRAIGHT AT HIM...



FRANK BOYLE

IN A HOTEL ROOM, TIM HOLT WHIRLS TOWARD A WINDOW. HIS EYES STRAIN INTO THE NIGHT...

CHITO! COME HERE—
THERE'S A FIGHT DOWN
BELOW! TWO MEN
AGAINST A YOUNG
COWHAND!



THOSE ARE
ODDS I DON'T
LIKE!



TIM HOLT

WITH A SPRING OF HIS POWERFUL LEGS, TIM RIDES THE CLOTHESLINE, HIGH ABOVE THE STREET...

CAN'T GET DOWN THERE ANY FASTER THAN THIS!



WHAT TH—?

GET SET FOR A FALL, HOMBRE!



HERE I COME!

Yiii!

HUM?



TIM'S SUDDEN ONSLAUGHT DRIVES WIND AND REASON FROM THE BAD HATS! THEN, IN THE DUST OF THE ALLEY, TIM'S FISTS HIT LIKE PILEDRIVERS!



AND OFF TO ONE SIDE, TERROR MARKED PLAIN ON HIS YOUNG FACE, CLIFF PARKER SPRINGS TO HIS FEET AND—RUNS!

MESBEE IT'S A TRICK... MESBEE THAT HOMBRE WHO JUMPED TO HELP ME WANTS WHAT I GOT FOR HIMSELF. I GOT TO HIGH-TAIL IT...



SOME MINUTES LATER, IN A LITTLE ROOM AT A SMALL HOTEL AT THE FAR END OF SUNSET'S MAIN STREET, CLIFF PARKER SMOOTHS OUT A WRINKLED SHEET OF PARCHMENT...



LUCKY FOR ME I HAD THIS HIDDEN IN MY HATBAND! NOW I GOT TO PUT IT SOMEWHERE SAFE—BUT WHERE? WHERE?



DOWN ON THE STREET, TIM AND CHITO WATCH THE DISGRUNTLED BAD HATS WALK AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS...

NO SENSE HOLDING THEM, CHITO—THE HOMBRE THEY ATTACKED VAMPOSED!

NOW MAYBE WE ARE FOR TO EAT, NO? CHITO GONZALEZ BUS-TAMONTE RAPPERTY EES FEELING HIS BACK-BONE TOUCHING KEE'S BELT BUCKLE!



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT

A THE WOLF-DOG, THUNDER DROVES BEFORE THE CRACKLING PINE KNOTS IN THE T BARN RANCH HOUSE FIREPLACE, HIS KEEN EARS LIFT, A GROWL RUMBLES IN HIS THROAT...



A TENSING OF MIGHTY MUSCLES, A LEAP OF FURRED FURY...



OVER AND OVER MAN AND BEAST ROLL! THEY FIGHT SAVAGELY, BUT SILENTLY...



HOLD HIM STILL, DAN! I'LL PLUG HIM!

YOU'LL DO NO PLUGGING ON THIS RANCH, HOMBRE!



COVER THE OTHER ONE, CHITO!

EET SEEMS THUNDER EES FOR BE DOING THAT, TIM!



RECKON WE'LL ALL BE TAKING A RIDE INTO TOWN...TO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE!



ON THE WAY TO TOWN...

LOOKS LIKE DAN AN' LEM FAILED!

GIT THE HOMBRES WHO CAPTURED 'EM!





TIM HOLT

DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE HILLS BEYOND BUFFALO FLATS RIDE THE THREE TREASURE-SEEKERS. DAWN FINDS THEM WALKING THEIR MOUNTS UP A NARROW TRAIL IN THE RIPSAN RANGE...



NOT A SIGN OF ANYONE FOLLOWING. LOOKS LIKE WE GAVE THEM THE SHAKE...

ACROSS THE BROAD, FLAT MERCURY RIVER, THEN ONTO THE SALT FLATS. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIPSAN RANGE...

WE GOT TO HIT UP THROUGH THE BADLANDS, THEN CUT OVER TOWARD GHOST MOUNTAIN!

THAT'S ANOTHER THREE, FOUR DAYS TRAVEL. LET'S KEEP MOVING!



BEHIND THEM, FOLLOWING A PAIR OF BLOODHOUNDS—

HIRIN! THESE HOUNDS WAS THE BEST IDEA WE HAD YET! WHEN HOLT GAVE US THE SLIP, I FIGGERED WE WAS OUT IN THE COLD... BUT NOT ANYMORE!



MENACING GUNS ARE THE PASSPORTS TO FRESH MOUNTS AT A WAYSIDE STAGECOACH TAVERN...

WE AIN'T STEALIN' THESE SADDLERS— WE'RE EXCHANGIN' OUR WORN-OUT BRONCS FOR YORES...



AND THEN TOWARD SUNSET OF THE FOURTH DAY AWAY FROM THE T-BACK HOME RANGE...



THEY'RE FIXIN' CHOW!

LET 'EM EAT, AN' GIT SOME SLEEP. WE DON'T WANT TO TANGLE WITH THET HOLT HOMBRE IF WE DON'T HAVE TO. HE'S POISON WITH A COLT...



AS THE STARS WINK INTO BRILLIANCE IN THE SKY, CLIFF AND CHITO DRAW THEIR SLEEPING BAGS OVER THEM. BUT TIM PATROLS THE LITTLE CAMP...

WHILE HE'S TURNED AWAY, I'LL MAKE MY CAST!



RECKON THIS WAY WE CAN HANDLE HIM—

THUD!



TIM HOLT

A S TIM STRUGGLES AGAINST THE POUNDING ACHES IN HIS HEAD AND THE RUBBERY FEELING IN HIS KNEES, THE BAD HATS LEAP ON CHITO AND CLIFF...



WHERE IS IT, HOMBRE? IF YUH DON'T ANSWER, YOU AN' YO'RE PARDS EWING FROM THE NEAREST TREE...



NO! NO! I CAN'T LET ANY HARM COME TO CHITO... THE MAP'S IN MY BOOT! THE RIGHT ONE!



THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

B UT AS THE BOOT IS PULLED OFF, AND THE MAP WITHDRAWN...



GOT TO GET MY BALANCE! MAYBE I CAN OUTRUN THEM - TO THE EDGE OF THE CANYON...



GOT TO RISK A THROW!



T IM'S PRACTICED HANDS MAKE A PERFECT THROW. BUT TO HIS HORROR, HIS LOOP FALLS OVER A ROTTED STUMP - THAT PULLS LOOSE AS HE FALLS DOWNWARD WITH THE SPEED OF A HUNTING HAWK!



TIM HOLT

AND THEN, WITH A FORCEFUL JERK THAT ALMOST SNAPS TIM'S HANDS FROM HIS ROPE, THE STUMP CATCHES ON A PROTRUDING ROCK—

GOT TO... GET BACK UP... SOON AS I CAN! THOSE OWHOOTS WILL BE HUNTING MY DEAD BODY... FOR THE MAP I TOOK... ON THE CANYON FLOOR...

AY DI MU! TIM! YOU ARE BEING ALIVE!

YUH WENT OVER THAT CLIFF LIKE A ROCK!

I HAD TO TAKE A CHANCE. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY! NOW—LET'S RIDE!

DAY AFTER DAY, THE TRIO RACE THROUGH THE TIMBER BELT, BEHIND THEM, TRAVELLING AS FAST, COME MEN WHOSE BRAINS BLAZE WITH ONE THOUGHT—

AS SOON AS WE SIGHT THEM—WE START SHOOTIN'! AN' MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT!

UGGHHH...

DRYGULCHER!

STOP! DON'T SHOOT ANYMORE! YOU CAN HAVE THE MAP!

SOME HOURS LATER, AFTER CLIFF HAS WORKED OVER TIM AND CHITO WITHOUT REST...

YOU GAVE UP THE MAP TO SAVE OUR LIVES, CLIFF?

SURE! THAT TREASURE AIN'T WORTH YOU AND CHITO BEING KILLED! NO TREASURE IS!

—WHEW— THAT BULLET MUST'VE HURT ME MORE THAN I THOUGHT! I'M DIZZY! THE GROUND IS SWINGING BACK AND FORTH... GOT TO GRAB ROCK... STEADY MYSELF!

TIM HOLT

STILL DIZZY, TIM CLIMBS WITH CHITO AND CLIFF, UP THE SLOPES OF GHOST MOUNTAIN. FAR AHEAD OF THEM, ENTERING THE MOUTH OF THE TREASURE CAVE, ARE THE OUTLAWS...

THEY FOUND IT! LOOK! THEY'RE GOIN' IN!

I'M NOT MUCH HELP TO YOU. I'M GETTING ANOTHER OF THESE DIZZY SPELLS!

EEF YOU ARE BE DEEZY, SO AM I!

DIZZY? NO WONDER I FELT DIZZY. THIS IS AN EARTHQUAKE! THIS IS THE DANGER CLIFF'S DAD WARNED ABOUT! WE'RE IN EARTHQUAKE TERRITORY!

AS IF ALIVE, THE GROUND SWELLS AND HUMPS BENEATH TIM'S FEET! Gaping cracks in the ground open, then close! HELPLESS BEFORE THE FURY OF NATURE, TIM AND CHITO AND CLIFF PARKER CROUCH ON THE GROUND.

LOOK UP THERE! THE CLIFFSIDE IS CAVING IN! THE MOUTH OF THE TREASURE CAVE IS FALLING... BEING COVERED UP! THOSE OWLHOOTS ARE INSIDE... THEY'LL BE BURIED ALIVE!

FOR HELPLESS MINUTES, TIM CAN ONLY CLING TO DIRT AND HOPE THAT HE AND HIS COMPANIONS WILL NOT BE SWEEPED INTO THE MAW OF THE OPENING EARTH. AND FINALLY THE QUAKE SUBSIDES...

WE CAN THANK OUR STARS THOSE OWLHOOTS STOLE THAT MAP! IF THEY HADN'T, WE WOULD BE SEALED UP IN THAT CAVE—WITHOUT A CHANCE OF GETTING OUT!

AS IT IS, WE CAN FREE THEM, TIE THEM UP, AND TAKE THEM TO THE NEAREST SHERIFF'S OFFICE...

AN' CLEEF CAN HAVE HEE'S TREASURE FOR HEE'S MOTHER! AN' HEE'S SEESTERS!

EARLY THE NEXT DAY, THE MEER AND TERRIFIED OUTLAWS FILE FROM THE RE-OPENED CAVE-MOUTH...

WE'RE FINISHED! BEIN' IN THERE WHEN THE QUAKE STARTED—CURED ME OF TREASURE-HUNTIN' PERMANENTLY!

ME TOO!

WITH THEIR PRISONERS TIED, TIM AND CHITO AND CLIFF PARKER FINALLY STAND SPELLBOUND BEFORE GOAL'S END—THE LOST TREASURE TRAIL OF THE SPANISH CONQUISTADORE, CORONADO!

IT'S A KING'S RANDOM!

NOW MOM AN' MY SISTERS WILL HAVE WHAT THEY'VE ALWAYS WANTED...NICE CLOTHES...A GOOD HOME...PLENTY TO EAT... THANKS TO YOU, TIM!

THE END

TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

AND THE
"BADLAND BRAVES!"



UP FROM TEXAS AND ARIZONA, DRAGGING ALONG FOR WEARY WEEKS AND MILES OF TRAVEL, COME THE ROAD-BRANDED TRAIL HERDS OF THE SOUTHWESTERN RANCHES. ACROSS SWOLLEN RIVERS AND THROUGH MADDENING DUST STORMS, INTO INDIAN TERRITORY...
AND THERE, WHAT SEEM TO BE PAINTED KIWAS...OR COMANCHES...OR DEAGES...OR ARAPAHOS...FALL WITH ULULATING SCREAMS AND TWANGING BOWS AND BLASTING RIFLES ON THE RIDERS. NO MERCY IS SHOWN. THE FALSE INDIANS WANT CATTLE, AND THEY TAKE THEM. WHOEVER STANDS IN THEIR PATH — **DIES!**

WHEN RAID AFTER RAID CASTS A FALL OF TERROR ACROSS THE WESTERN TRAIL, THE FIFTH CAVALRY MOVES AGAINST THE REAL INDIANS. ON A BRIGHT MAY MORNING, A RIFLE CRACKS FROM A COTTONWOOD GROVE...



BLASTED INJUNS!

STEAL WHITE MEN'S CATTLE, WILL YUH?

KILLER WHITE MEN! KILL FOR NO REASON!

KA-GUA!
WE KIWAS WILL DO THE SAME!

TIM HOLT

ON A LITTLE HILL, BITTERNESS TWISTING HIS FIRM YOUNG LIPS, STANDS CHUL-LE-LILLO, CHILD CHIEF OF THE KIOWA NATION...

TO THE ROCKS, MY PEOPLE! INTO THE HILLS! THERE THE BLUECOATS WILL NEVER FIND US!



ED NOTE: SEE "KIOWA DEATH TRAP" IN TIM HOLT, ISSUE 11.

WARCLUB AND SABRE MEET IN MID-AIR, AS HATE-SAVAGE MEN REEL AND STRUGGLE ACROSS THE DUSTY PLAINS! SLOWLY, THE KIOWAS DIS-ENGAGE THEMSELVES FROM THE FIFTH CAVALRY...



FALL BACK!
FALL BACK!

HERE AND THERE IN THE ROCKS, SOME STAND AND FIGHT...

BLUECOATS GO NO FURTHER!

STOP RIGHT HERE!



...WHILE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE TRIBE FLEES BETWEEN TWO TALL CLIFF-SIDES!

MY FRIEND, TIM HOLT, WILL HELP CHUL-LE-LILLO AND HIS RACE. TIM IS HONEST. HE WILL POINT OUT TO BLUE COATS THEIR MISTAKE...



CLEVERLY, DROPPING BACK, ONE BY ONE, THE KIOWAS BREAK OFF THE FIGHT. THEY DROP BACK AS THEIR BEST SHARP-SHOOTERS PIN THE BLUECOATS TO THE ROCKS UNTIL ALL HAVE FLED...

THE INJUNS ARE LIKE GOATS ON THESE ROCKS! WE SLIP AN' SLIDE, BUT IT'S LIKE HOME TO THEM!



THAT NIGHT A SINGLE FIGURE FLIES LIKE THE WIND BENEATH THE SILVER MOON...

IT IS LONG RIDE, BUT MY PONY IS FRESH, AND I AM YOUNG. WE WILL NOT SLEEP...



AND SO, ONE MORNING AT THE CORRAL GATE OF THE T BAR H...

IS GOOD SEE MY WHITE BROTHER...

WHY—IT'S CHARLEY HELLO! GRAB HIM, SOMEBODY! HE'S KEELING OVER!



TIM HOLT

AFTER A FOURTEEN-HOUR SLEEP, CHARLEY HELLO TALKS BETWEEN BITES AT A THREE POUND STEAK... HMMM!

THAT IS HOW IT IS, TIM. MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DRIVEN FROM THEIR HUNTING GROUNDS. THE BLUECOATS HUNT THEM DOWN. YET WE ARE INNOCENT. WE NEVER RUSTLED THOSE STEERS!

RECKON I'D BETTER RIDE BACK WITH YOU, CHARLEY — THE SOONER, THE BETTER!



SOME DAYS LATER, IN THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS AT FORT HATCHET...

CHUL-LE-LILLO, OR CHARLEY HELLO, AS I CALL HIM — IS A FRIEND, COLONEL! HIS KIWAS ARE PEACEFUL. I RAISED CHARLEY FOR A YEAR OR TWO AT MY RANCH. I KNOW!



OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, OPEN BECAUSE OF THE HEAT...

HE'S TALKIN' THE COLONEL OUT OF HIS CAMPAIGN TO TESS THEM KIWAS INTO THE RESERVATION! HUH! RECKON I GOT TO DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT THIS!



THIS LARIAT WITH THE HONDA HAVIN' HOLT'S RANCH BRAND ON IT OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK...



SOME HOURS LATER, IN THE FOOT HILLS OF THE PAWNEE BEND MOUNTAINS...

GIT INSIDE, BOYS. WE GOT A JOB TO DO!



HOLT TALKED THE COLONEL OUT OF HIS CAMPAIGN! THAT MEANS WE GOT TO GET HIM RILED AGAIN! IF THE COLONEL THINKS INJUNS STOLE THEM CATTLE — WE'RE SAFE!



AS LONG AS HE'S IN THE FIELD HUNTING KIWAS, HE WON'T BOTHER US. SO IT'S OUR JOB TO MAKE HIM THINK HOLT LIED — THAT HOLT IS WORKIN' WITH THE KIWAS... MEBBE COLLECTIN' STEERS FOR HIS RANCH...

LET'S RIDE!



TIM HOLT

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE NEXT MORNING, THE WHITE MEN—GLAD AS WAR-PAINTED KIOWA WARRIORS, RAID ANOTHER TRAIL HERD...



KIA! KIA!
KIA!

UGGGH!



WHEN THEY FIND THIS, THEY'LL BE SURE IT WAS HOLT AND HIS KIOWA RALS WHO RUSTLED THESE STEERS!



AS KID FILLEY HAD FORGOTTEN... SOME HOURS LATER, AT FORT HATCHET...

THERE'S NO DOUBT, SIR. IT'S HOLT'S LARIAT, ALL RIGHT. LOOKS LIKE HE TRICKED US!

ORDER THE BUGLER TO SOUND 'TO HORSE', LIEUTENANT! I'LL FIX THOSE RENEGADES IF IT'S THE LAST THING I EVER DO!



LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER, THE FIFTH CAVALRY TROTS FROM THE PARADE GROUNDS, GUIDONS FLAPPING IN THE BREEZE, RIFLES POLISHED, SABRES CLANKING. THE ORDER—DEATH TO THE KIOWAS!



AT THAT MOMENT, MOVING DOWN FROM THE ROCKY BADLANDS OF THE PRAIRIE BEND MOUNTAINS...

MY PEOPLE ARE HAPPY, TIM. THEY ARE RETURNING TO PEACE WITH HONOR!



THIS WILL HERALD A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR PEOPLE AND THE BLUECOATS, CHARLEY. NOW THE KIOWAS HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR. NOTHING!



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



I THOUGHT SO! NOW THAT I'M CLOSER, I CAN SEE THAT THOSE MEN AREN'T INDIANS — THEY'RE WHITE MEN MASQUERADING AS INDIANS! I THOUGHT THEIR WAR PAINT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE ANY WAR PAINT I'D EVER SEEN!



YOU AN YORE SMART IDEAS! YUH COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE. YUH HAD TO TURN THE CAVALRY ON HOLT — NOW HE'S BRINGIN' THEM AFTER US!

AHH, SHADDUP — AN' RIDE!



WITH BULLETS WHINING ALL AROUND HIM, TIM DRIVES LIGHTNING DOWN THE SLOPE OF A DEEP WASH...

THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US! CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE OF A BULLET DROPPING ON US —



— SO WE'LL PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US... UNTIL WE'RE READY TO LET THEM CATCH UP!

AND THEN, AS THE WHITE MEN TURN TO FACE THEIR PERSISTENT PURSUER —



THAT HE IS NOW!

BRING HIM DOWN! QUICK — 'FORE THEM BLUECOATS CATCH UP!



BUT TIM'S MAD RACE PAYS OFF! TROOPERS SWING IN, GUNS AND CARBINES IN HAND, AS TIM CRIES OUT —

COLONEL! I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU FIRED AT ME — BUT THE MEN YOU'RE AFTER ARE THERE — AT THE CABIN! THEY AREN'T INDIANS — BUT WHITE MEN!



WHY — I KNOW SOME OF THOSE FACES! I'VE SEEN THEM ON REWARD DOGGERS — LOITERERS AROUND THE FORT — WHISKEY PEDDLERS! HOLT, I'M AFRAID YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED!

NEVER MIND ME NOW, COLONEL. GET THOSE MEN!

TIM HOLT



AS THE CLARION CALL OF THE BUGLE RINGS OUT IN THE STILL AFTER-NOON AIR, A THIN LINE OF THE FIFTH CAVALRY BURSTS FROM THE TREES...AND WITH THEM RIDES TIM HOLT!



THE DANCING HOOVES OF THE GREAT STALLION SHAKE THE TRUTH FROM KIP FILLEY'S LOOSE LIPS...IN A BROKEN, SOBBING VOICE...AS TIM AND COLONEL BRADSHAW STAND OVER HIM...

I STOLE HOLT'S LARIAT AN' PLANTED IT SO IT'D BE FOUND, BUT HIS HORSE RECOGNIZED ME AS THE ONE WHO STOLE IT...AN' HOLT WAS SMART ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT! I FIGGERED HOLT AN' THEM KIDWAS WOULD BE DEAD 'BOUT NOW...AN ME AN' THE BOYS WOULD HAVE THEM CATTLE ALL TO OURSELVES...



THE END

TIM HOLT

the GHOST RIDER



OUT OF THE GREED AND FURY THAT WAS THE OLD WEST SOUNDS THE GALLOPING HOOVES OF A GREAT WHITE STALLION. AND ON HIS BACK A GLOWING FIGURE—GHOSTLY, WEIRD, SPECTRAL! FROM THE THROATS OF GOLD-GREEDY MEN, FROM THE RAW LIPS OF KILLERS AND OUTLAWS—A CRY OF FEAR RISES SHRILLY! THEY KNOW THIS MAN! THEY KNOW HIM FOR—

THE GHOST OF THE GHOST TOWN!

DICK AYERS

ON AN EARLY SPRING MORNING, REX FURY REINS IN AFTER A HOT TRIP ACROSS THE SUN-ROASTED SANDS OF A SOUTHWESTERN DESERT. AS MAN AND MOUNT SIP THE COOL WATERS OF A SPRING, A WINCHESTER SPANGS A BULLET OFF A ROCK!



WHAT THE — ?
DRYGULCHERS!



DOG-GONE! THET
THERE HOMBRE
KIN SHOOT!

WE BETTER DO
SOME SHOOTIN'
OURSELVES! HE'S DONE
STUMBLERED RIGHT ON
OUR FORTUNE!

TIM HOLT



MAN AND HORSE RACE MADLY ACROSS THE WASTELANDS, UNTIL, AT DUSK, SPECTRE'S HOOF'S BRAKE TO A GLIDING HALT BEFORE AN ABANDONED SALOON IN A DISMAL GHOST TOWN...



COME ON! WE'LL SMOKE HIM OUT!

CARRY HIM OUT, YUH MEAN!

NIXSA SALOON



TWO DAYS LATER, IN THE COW TOWN OF TEN MILE, PRETTY STELLA LARSEN IS TALKING OF THAT SAME GHOST TOWN...

LARSEN, HUH? ANY RELATION TO OLD ED LARSEN WHO USED TO OWN A HOTEL OVER IN BLUE MESA, THE GHOST TOWN...

I'M HIS NIECE. I INHERITED THE SALOON THERE, AND THE LAND AROUND IT.



INHERITED THE SALOON? SAY— YUH AIN'T FIGGERIN' ON GOIN' THERE, ARE YUH? THEY SAY IT'S HAUNTED. THREE RIDERS CAME IN LAST NIGHT SHAKIN' 'CAUSE THEY SEEN A GHOST— A REAL LIVE GHOST!

NONSENSE, SIR! BUT THANK YOU, ANYHOW.



YUH HEAR THAT? SHE'S HEADED OUT TO THAT TOWN!

A GHOST I DON'T MIND SO MUCH. ME DON'T WANT WHAT WE DO. BUT SHE WILL— 'CAUSE SHE OWNS IT!

WELL, LET'S HIGHTAIL IT AFTER HER! WE CAN GET RID OF A FEMALE, EASY!



UNSEEN AND UNHEARD BY THE THREE GUN-SLICKS, REX FURY MOVES FROM THE SHADOWS OF THE HOTEL...

RECKON IT WON'T BE EASY AS IT SEEMS, GENTS! I THINK THE GHOST RIDER WILL BE SASHAVING BACK TO THE GHOST TOWN—RIGHT PRONTO!



MINUTES LATER, IN THE ASSAY OFFICE OF TEN MILE...

DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU FOUND IT, FURY! BUT FILE CLAIM ON IT, QUICKLY! THAT STUFF ASSAYS TWO THOUSAND IN GOLD TO THE TON, AND FOUR THOUSAND IN SILVER!

WHEWW! JUST LIKE VIRGINIA CITY IN NEVADA, HUH? NO WONDER THOSE THREE HOMBRES WERE SO TRIGGER-HAPPY WHEN THEY SAW ME DRINKING WATER RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR FORTUNE!



THAT NIGHT, AS THE DESERT MOON RISES OVER THE GHOST TOWN OF BLUE MESA, THREE DARK FORMS DART ACROSS THE SILVERED STREET...

SHE'S INSIDE, ALL RIGHT!

YEAH! THE LIGHT JUST WENT OUT. SHE'LL SCARE PLenty WHEN BULLETS START RINGIN' AROUND HER PURTY EARS!



THREE COLT REVOLVERS LEVEL. THREE FINGERS CROOK AND TIGHTEN ON THREE TRIGGERS. FRAMED IN THE GUNS' SIGHTS IS STELLA LARSEN—



TIM HOLT



YEEEOOOH!
A-A-A HAND
JUST FLOATIN'
THERE IN
THE AIR!



THUD!
NOT JUST A HAND!
A HAND - WITH
A CLUB!



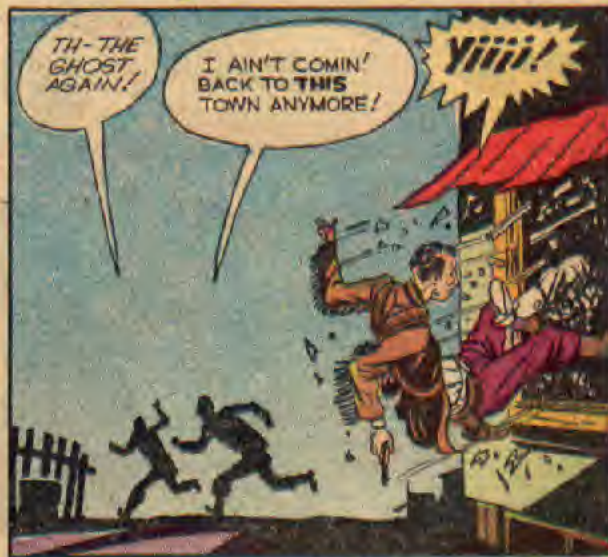
I'M GETTIN' OUT
O' HERE! I WOULDN'T
BE SURPRISED IF
THET WOMAN WAS
A GHOST, TOO!

ARE YOU
GOING
SOMEPLACE
HOMBRE?



AAAAGGHN!

OH, I SEE!
YOU'RE GOING
ON A -TRIP!



TH-THE
GHOST
AGAIN!

I AIN'T COMIN'
BACK TO THIS
TOWN ANYMORE!

Yiii!



NEXT MORNING -

THAT'S RIGHT, MA'M!
I FOUND BLUE CLAY
AND HAD IT ASSAYED.
IT ADDS UP TO A FORTUNE -
AND IT'S ALL YOURS!

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
IF YOU FOUND IT... ISN'T IT
YOURS? THERE WAS SO
MUCH EXCITEMENT
LAST NIGHT - I'M SURE
THREE MEN CAME INTO
MY ROOM... BUT... I'M
ALL UPSET!



NO NEED TO BE UPSET, MA'M.
THE FORTUNE IS ON YOUR LAND.
THOSE THREE HOMBRES WHO
CAME HERE LAST NIGHT WANT
IT. THEY THOUGHT TO SCARE
YOU OUT AN' GET IT THEMSELVES!
FILE CLAIM ON IT AN' YOU'VE
GOT 'EM BEATEN!

I SEE,
I'LL RIDE
AT ONCE
AND -
THANK
YOU!

MESA SALUDN

TIM HOLT

THE GHOST TOWN OF BLUE MESA IS MANY MILES FROM TEN MILE. THE WAY IS LONG AND HOT. TOWARD SUNSET, STELLA LARSEN MOVES THROUGH RUZZARD PASS, UNAWARE THAT THE THREE SIN SLICKS HAVE RACED BEYOND HER —



SHOOT HER DOWN! REMEMBER — THAT GHOST AIN'T HERE — SO, LET'S RIDE!

LESS THAN A MILE BEHIND STELLA, REX FURY HAS SHADOWED HER ALL DAY LONG. NOW HE SPURS FORWARD AS — THE GHOST RIDER!

THOSE THREE OWLHOOTS — ON THAT RIDGE UP AHEAD / SPURRING DOWN TOWARDS THAT GIRL!



STOP TALKIN' — SHOOT!



SUDDENLY — AS THE OUTLAWS SHUDDER IN FRIGHT AND AWE — THE GHOST RIDER LOSES HIS HEAD!

YIIIIII!

STARTLED AND SPOOKED, THE OUTLAWS' HORSES START BUCKING, WITH SNRILL WHINNIES OF FEAR...



YES, MA'N! AND NOW — IF YOU'LL DO ME A FAVOR...



CONTINUE ON INTO TEN MILE! TELL THE SHERIFF THREE OUTLAWS WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU AND STEAL YOUR CLAIM TO THAT GOLD AND SILVER-BEARING GROUND ARE HERE — JUST WAITING TO BE THROWN INTO JAIL!

I'LL DO IT, GHOST RIDER! AND — ALIVE OR DEAD — I'M GLAD YOU'RE MY FRIEND...



The MULE And The TRAIN

IT WAS spring in the year 1828. All along the Santa Fe trail the wagons creaked and rolled, chained casks swinging under the jangling tail-gates, the whips of the bearded drivers snapping, the oxen ploughing ahead across the dun wastes of southwestern Kansas. Part of a continent was on the march, sunlight glinting on the long rifles of the buckskin-clad trappers, and on the pistols in the holsters of the drivers.

Jeb Norwood stood in a clump of mesquite, fighting back the tears. Behind him was a charred cabin and three graves that he had dug himself. Paw was back there, and Maw, and little Cissie. He had hurried them, with his Paw's shovel, and now he was alone — twelve years old, with only a gun and Paw's lop-eared mule, Temper, to call his own.

"Mebbe they'll give me a place with 'em," he muttered to the big grey mule, staring at the oncoming wagons. "I can h'ist water an' chop wood. Mebbe even I could get 'em some meat, if they'd give me some powder."

He was ragged and dirty, but there were muscles under his tanned skin, and his eyes were grey and direct. He walked like an Indian, with back straight and his long legs bent and sliding. The rifle hung, muzzle downward, over his arm.

A bearded driver saw him first and sent a stream of brown tobacco spraying beyond the rounded rump of his off wheel ox. He jerked a thumb back over his shoulder at the boy's question.

"The wagon boss is five teams back, son," said the driver. "If'n he lets yuh stay with us, yuh kin sit up here with me. Gits plumb lonesome with only these dumb oxen to palaver with!"

The wagon boss was a lean man, big in the shoulders, with long yellow hair and blue eyes. He wore two pistols strapped around his middle, with a Green River hunting knife in a bead-decorated sheath. Jeb heard the men address him as Charley. His face was grave

as Jeb told what had happened.

"Of course, son. We'll be especially since yuh own a mule."

One or two of the men looked at him, but the others seemed indifferent. But the tall, lean man meant. He then asked, "I could stand a ball. Paw shot most of his away from Injuns."

A bearded man with a cross on his cheek grunted derisively. "It out on the sand, Charley! W young 'un like him know 'bout a gun?"

Jeb felt the red flush tinge his cheeks. He drew himself up stiffly. "I got a good look at 'em Comanches yestiddy. Only had two bullets left, too!"

Charley laughed softly. He said, "All right, boy. You find yoreself a wagon to latch onto, an' see me tomorrow."

Jeb found his driver friend and lashed the lead-string of the mule to a tailgate chain. Then he swung up onto the big broad seat of the Dearborn beside the tobacco-chewing teamster. The man nodded at him, and grinned. "Glad to see that wall-eyed mule o' yours, youngster. These new-fangled oxen can pull a loaded wagon, but when it comes to —"

The driver shook his head and let his words trail off. From him, Jeb learned that this was one of a Bent, St. Vrain Company caravan, bound for Santa Fe. Its great vans and wagons were loaded with silks and metalware, guns and powder, glassware and silver. Every eye was on the lookout for Comanches of Kiowas, for they raided the wagons for its *caballada*, or horse herd.

"Seems they take a fancy to them knives we're packin', too," growled the driver, whose name was Brad. "An' beads, an' colored cloths! Huh! Reckon they'd plumb take everything that ain't nailed down tight!!!"

At night, young Jeb slept behind the shallow tail-gate, his small body packed into the narrow space under some bolts of silk. He would stare up at the stars and blink his eyes hard, remembering his mother's soft voice, and his father's hearty shout, and the happy laughter of his little sister.

And then, four nights after Jeb Norwood joined the caravan, he froze to silent immobility, as voices floated out of the night air near the tail-gate of Brad's wagon, where he lay stretched out.

"I tell ye, the time is now," said an excited voice. "They've come so far toward Santa Fe, they bean't thinkin' on Injuns no more! Why, man alive! There bean't no more guards posted of nights. Charley Bent is sleepin' right now, 'stead of worryin' 'bout any redskins!"

Jeb remembered that hoarse voice. His memory called up a bearded face marked with

TIM HOLT

ear on the cheek. It was the
bed him about shooting his
voice joined his. "But are
anches will split with us?"
from the scarred-face man.
hem beads an' chesp knives,
What use they got for sil-
Can they use gold candle-
the loot of this rich wagon
we do this right!"
ed off, their voices fading. Jeb
at, shaking with excitement.
peered over the side of the
g the canvas hood. Then he
tail-gate, lowered it, and dropped
ound. He ran swiftly as his legs could
Charley Bent's wagon.

tall, lean man was sitting with his
k propped to a big wheel, smoking his last
pe for the night. He looked up curiously at
Jeb, then grew ominously silent as Jeb talked.
"So," smiled Bent coldly, "Blackie Logan
figures to side th' Injuns ag'in us, does he?
Young un, yuh did right to come to me. How's
that mule o' your'n?"

Jeb grinned. "Gettin' fat an' sassy, loafin'
along behind that wagon."

Bent laughed. "I'm givin' yuh a saddle. Put
it on him. Take him ridin' out in front of the
train from now on. Yuh savvy?"

His heart thudding excitedly, Jeb nodded.
The big man stooped and lifted a small par-
felche bag. "There's powder an' ball in here
for yore rifle. I'll be keepin' an eye on yuh,
son." Jeb grinned faintly, and his hand closed
tightly over the beaded parfelche bag. His
heart thumped excitedly. It was a good feel-
ing to be needed, Jeb thought.

He walked to Brad's wagon and unhitched
the rope hackamore that was tied to the end-
gate. Leading Temper, Jeb walked through
the starlight between the clumps of sotol and
ocotillo. His rifle hung, barrel downward,
across an arm. His young eyes searched the
horizon.

Jeb walked steadily through the dawn. A

mile or two behind him, the big vans were
rumbling. And he, Jeb, was being trusted to
be lookout for all that wealth back there! A
proud tingle went through his veins—

Then Temper lifted his head and brayed!

Jeb froze in his tracks. He had heard Tem-
per bray like that before! It had been when
the redskins were shooting at his Paw and
Paw—

Jeb lifted his gun and fired three times,
quickly, as fast as he could trigger his rifle.
Three shots in rapid succession was the warn-
ing of the plains. Now the wagon train moving
slowly behind him a mile or more away would
know that there were Kiowas and Comanches
somewhere up ahead. The oxen would begin
their slow swing, the huge wagons would
away as they were drawn into a tight circle!

Bent had known, as Jeb had, that a smart
mule like Temper was worth his weight in
gold to a wagon train. There was some instinct
in mules that made them smell out Injuns
from miles away. That was why Bent had sent
young Jeb out ahead to ride point—

Jeb choked. A feathered warbonnet rose up
against the red horizon. He could see the bear-
claw necklace, the metal armband. A warpaint-
ed face opened a wide mouth that shrieked a war-
cry. An arrow thudded into the dust some
feet beyond Jeb.

Jeb raised his gun and fired. He saw the
Indian slip back over the rump of his pony
and drop lifeless to the ground. Jeb grinned.
"Ha! Mebbe now that man with the scar
wouldn't laugh at th' idea of me an' my rifle!"

There were other Indians now, racing to-
ward young Jeb. He jumped on Temper and
turned him, kicking his ribs with drumming
heels. "Git a move on, thar, Temper! We got
to beat them Injuns back to the wagons!"

Jeb turned on the mule and fired his rifle,
again and again. Once he saw a white man
riding among the Indians throw up his arms
and topple to the ground. "Serves him right,
th' yaller turncoat," Jeb growled.

Now the wagons were in front of him, the
prairie wind bellying their big canvas cover-
ings. Sunlight glistened on long rifle barrels
poked out from behind wagonwheels and tail-
gates. Jeb could see Charley Bent standing
with his sixguns in his hands. Bent shouted,
"Yuh're there, young 'un! Mebbe yuh'd better
turn in—see if yuh can get some shuteye
while we drive off them varmints."

But Jeb shook his head and his eyes were
shining. "No sir, Reckon I ain't sleepy yet. I
recognized one or two of those redskins. They
finished off my Paw. I'll want to settle with
them!"

And with head held high Jeb walked on to
find a battle station, knowing that wherever
his Paw was he would be looking at him,
proud of him. . .

THE END



TIM HOLT

WESTERN RANGE

BOTALYE'S BRAVERY—THE GREATEST FEAT OF COURAGE SHOWN BY ANY OR RED, TOOK PLACE IN SEPTEMBER, 1874, WHEN KIO WAS ATTACKED AN AR TRAIN. BOTALYE, A YOUNG ROPE FOUR TIMES IN AND THE CIRCLED U.S. SOLDIER UNARMED!—AND ESCAPED INJURY!



PARFLECHE BAG—A RAWHIDE BAG USED BY THE PLAINS INDIANS TO CARRY FOOD OR CLOTHING, AND SOMETIMES EVEN WEAPONS. DECORATED WITH BEADS AND QUILLS, THEY WERE ORNATE AND BEAUTIFUL.



—WILL AYERS—

A NORTHER WAS A FIERCE SNOW STORM THAT STRUCK AT THE MONTANA AND WYOMING CATTLE RANCHES. IF VERY FIERCE, IT RUINED ENTIRE RANCHES. IN THE GREAT WINTER OF 1888 IT STRIPPED THE RANGES OF MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF ITS CATTLE.



GLOSSARY...

HAZE—TO DRIVE AT A GOOD PACE, AS A HERD OF CATTLE
PULL STAKES—TO GO AWAY

I OUT OF THE CLOUDS THEY CAME, THESE GRIM, HARD MEN WHO RODE WITH A GUN IN ONE HAND AND A GREED-BORN CURVE HOOKING THE FINGERS OF THE OTHER. BUT, THEY WERE REAL. THEIR BULLETS KILLED, AND THEIR HORSES LEFT TRACKS —UP TO A CERTAIN POINT...!

FROM THEN ON, IT WAS AS IF THE STRANGE RIDERS GALLOPED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH, TO SOME REMOTE, CLOUD-MYSTY RANCH HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SAFE.

BUT TIM HOLT AND HIS PRAIRIE-LAND PARD, CHITO, TANGLED WITH THESE WEIRD OWLHOOTS, AND MANAGED TO FIND THE ANSWER TO THE STRANGE RIDDLE OF

"The Sky Riders!"



THEY COME SWOOPIN' DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS THEMSELVES!



JEDSERPHAT!
IT'S
THEM!

BUT BY THE TIME THEY GOT TO THE ELK GAP STAGE, THEY WERE AS REAL AS YOU OR ME! ONE OF 'EM FLANG HISSELF IN FRONT OF THE LEAD HORSES, TH' OTHER BLAZED AWAY WITH HIS COLT!"



WE QUIT!

TIM HOLT

AS POP GENTRY FINISHES HIS TALE OF THE SKY RIDERS, TIM DOWNS HIS GLASS OF CHILLED MILK...

SO YOU THINK THEY COME DOWN OUT OF THE SKY, EH, POP?

I SAW 'EM WITH MY OWN GOOD EYES. IF I WAS YOU, I'D BE PLUMB CAREFUL HOW I WENT PAST EAGLE VALLEY. THAT'S WHERE THEM HOMBRES OPERATE.

I DO THAT, SON.



ORDINARILY, I'D LAUGH AT THAT STORY, CHITO, BUT SINCE I'M CARRY MORE THAN FIFT THOUSAND DOLLAR OF OTHER PEOPLE MONEY —



FOR DAY AFTER DAY, TIM RIDES SOUTH. THE MONEY IN HIS WARE BAG SEEMS HEAVIER AND HEAVIER. IT IS HIS FRIENDS' MONEY—CASH FROM THE SALE OF THEIR CATTLE IN ABILENE, AND IT PREYS ON HIS MIND. THEN, EARLY ONE MORNING, HIS WORRY BECOMES TANGIBLE AS HE IS TAKEN BY SURPRISE...



I JUST... OPENED MY EYES WHEN... YOU LANDED ON ME!

MIGHT AS WELL... GIVE UP... HOMBRE!



WE'LL HOLD HIM, MAL!

SLASH HIM NOW!

THUDD!



ALMOST OUT ON HIS FEET, BUT FIGHTING WITH DAIED FEROCITY, TIM CARRIES HIS ASSAILANTS BACKWARD...

GOT TO... HOLD 'EM OFF... UNTIL CHITO... CAN GIVE ME... A HAND!



RECKON THIS WILL STOP YUM, HOMBRE!



TIM HOLT

EXHAUSTED RIDERS SLIDE FROM THEIR SADDLES. THERE IS EXHAUSTION AND PAIN IN

WE ARE LUCKY FOR NOT BE DEAD, TIM! ONE OF THEM WAS HIT ME WHILE I AM BE STILL DREAMING BEEN MY BEDROLL!



WE'LL REST UP FOR A FEW DAYS. GET OUR STRENGTH BACK. THEN WE'RE GOING BACK TO EAGLE VALLEY!

ESS BE GOOD IDEA TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE HOMBERS, EH? MAYBE ASK FOLKS IN TOWN WHAT EET EES THEY ARE FOR KNOWING!



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, WILLING TONGUES PAINT A GRIM PICTURE TO TIM...

THEY HOLD UP STAGE-COACHES AND TRAINS! THEY KEEP EVERYONE IN THE VALLEY PARALYSED WITH FRIGHT!

SURE, I'VE FOLLOWED THEM. I SERVED WITH THREE POSSES. I TELL YUH, THEY GOT MAGIC HORSES.

I HEAR PLENTY OF GOSSIP OVER MY BAR! THEY COME FROM THE CLOUDS! DON'T ASK ME HOW—BUT THEY DO!



FOUR DAYS LATER, THEIR WARBAGS CRAMMED WITH FOOD, THEIR BIG CANTENS FILLED WITH SPRING WATER, TIM AND CHITO GALLOP INTO THE ROCKY HILLS.

I'VE GIVEN OUT THAT THOSE OWLHOOTS MISSED ANOTHER THIRTY THOUSAND—SAID IT WAS IN MY LEFT BOOT. I RECKON THAT OUGHT TO FETCH THEM AGAIN!

I AM NOT SO SURE I AM AS HAPPY ABOUT THEE IDEA AS YOU ARE SEEM TO BE!



BUT NOW TIM NEVER SLEEPS AT NIGHT! HE DOZES BY DAY IN THE SADDLE, BUT WHEN THE STARS COME OUT...

LOOKS AS THOUGH WE'VE CAUGHT A FISH—WITH US AS BAIT!



GOT YOU!

WHA—?



TONIGHT IS GOING TO TELL A DIFFERENT STORY, MISTER!



TIM HOLT



BUT CHITO'S ACCURATE RIFLE FIRE IS HAMMERING HOME NOT LEAD-
EV ARGUMENTS IN THE FACES OF
THE SNARLING OUTLAWS...

LET THEM GO, CHITO. GIVE
THEM A HEAD START! WE'LL
FOLLOW AFTERWARD. I
WANT TO LEARN THE
SECRET BEHIND THEIR
JOURNEY INTO
THE CLOUDS!

AFTER BINDING THE UNCONSCIOUS
OUTLAWS FOR THE SHERIFF TO FIND,
THE PRAIRIELAND PARTNERS MOVE
SWIFTLY UP INTO THE MALPAIS, UNTIL...

BY! EES FONNY!
THE TRACKS ARE
ENDING HERE -
HUH - (T'S AL-
MOST AS IF
THEY JUST
KEPT ON RIDING
- STRAIGHT UP INTO
THE SKY - AS EVERY-
ONE SAYS THEY DO...!

TIM HOLT

BEYOND THE
L AROUND ITS
POORLY, BAFFLED,
HIDE CIRCLE...

THERE MUST
BE SOME SECRET
TUNNELING EEN
ROCKS! WE
DEED NOT SEE
EET!

LOOKS THAT
WAY, RECKON
IT'S THEIR
ROUND, CHITO...

HOLD ON!
THERE THEY
ARE NOW—
UP THERE!

WE CAN STILL GET
THEM! DIG DIRT,
LIGHTNING!

HOURS LATER, TIM SPEAKS BITTERLY
IN THE NIGHT...

LOST THEM!
WE'LL NEVER FIND
THEM IN THIS CRAZY
COUNTRY OF ROCK
AND LAVA GROUND...

EES THAT
WE ARE
BEATEN, EH?

MAYBE WE AREN'T
BEATEN YET, CHITO!
I'VE AN IDEA HOW
WE CAN TRAIL
THOSE RANNIES!
REMEMBER THOSE
MOUNTAIN GOATS
WE SAW NEAR
THOSE OWLHOOTS?

TIM! ARE
YOU GONE
LOCO? ARE
YOU EXPECT
THESE GOATS
TO BE TELL
US WHERE
THE
OUTLAWS
ARE?

NEXT DAY—

THE MOUNTAIN
GOATS WON'T TELL
US BUT THAT GOLDEN
EAGLE WILL...!

TIM HOLT



GOLDEN EAGLES PREY ON MOUNTAIN GOATS! WHEREVER THERE ARE GOATS, THERE ARE EAGLES—AND SINCE EAGLES ARE SO EASY TO SEE IN THE SKY, THEY WILL BE A BEACON TO US...!

DOWN THERE, CHITO! THAT OLD CLIFF DWELLER'S PALACE! THERE'S SMOKE COMING FROM A CHIMNEY—AND AN OUTLAW WALKING ALONG THE LEDGE!

YES, NO WONDERING THEY THINK TO BE FROM CLOUDS! NO ONE BUT HUMAN FLY LIKE YOU EES BE ABLE FINDING THEM!

WITH THE AGILITY OF THE MOUNTAIN GOATS THEMSELVES, TIM AND CHITO BOUND FROM ROCK TO ROCK, MOVING ALWAYS DOWNWARDS, TOWARD THE CLIFF HOMES—



MADE IT!

NOW THAT WE ARE BE MAKING BET, BET SEEMS TO ME THAT WE ARE GO THROUGH BEEG TROUBLE TO GET OURSELVES KILLED!



WE HAVE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WITH US, CHITO. THEY DON'T KNOW WE'RE HERE!



YUH LOCO IDJUT! WE HEARD YUH LAND ON THE LEDGE! NOW—HERE'S WHERE YUH GIT KILLED!

BLAMM!

TIM HOLT



THE GUNSHOTS BRING A FLOOD OF OUTLAWS TO THE WINDOWS OF THE NEARBY HOUSES. CAUGHT IN A CROSS-FIRE OF BULLETS, TIM AND CHITO RACE FOR COVER, AND DISCOVER —



WEAKENED BY CENTURIES OF TIME, BAKED BY SUN AND LASHED BY WIND AND RAIN, THE WALL TOPPLES WITH A CRASH OF BRICK AND DUST!

TWO DAYS LATER, A THIN LINE OF DUSTY, BEDRAGGLED "SKY RIDERS" FILE INTO EAGLE, EXHAUSTED AND WORN...



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YOUR 3 PENS WRITE

RED for danger
BLUE for secret
GREEN for "HI-YO! Let's GO!"

